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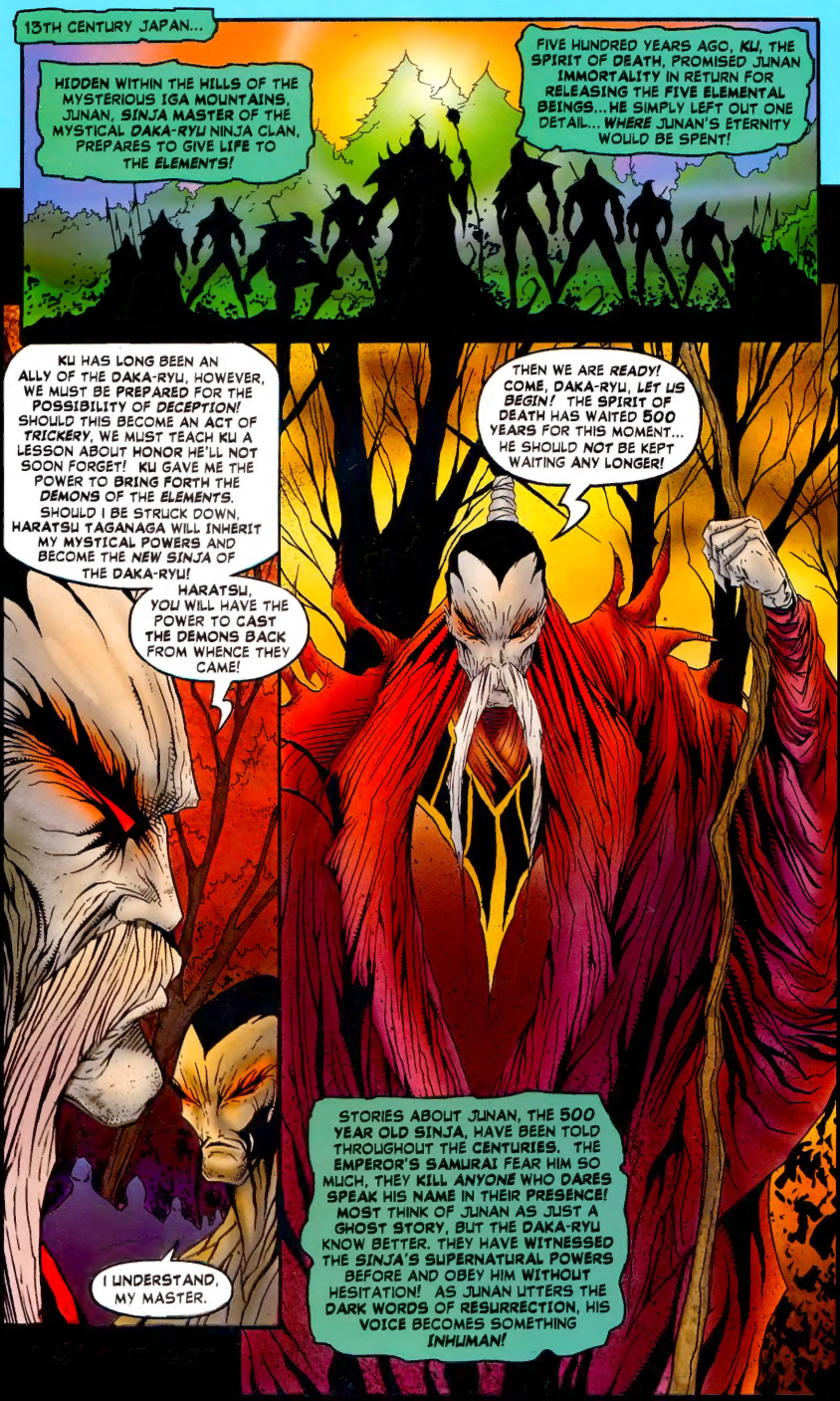
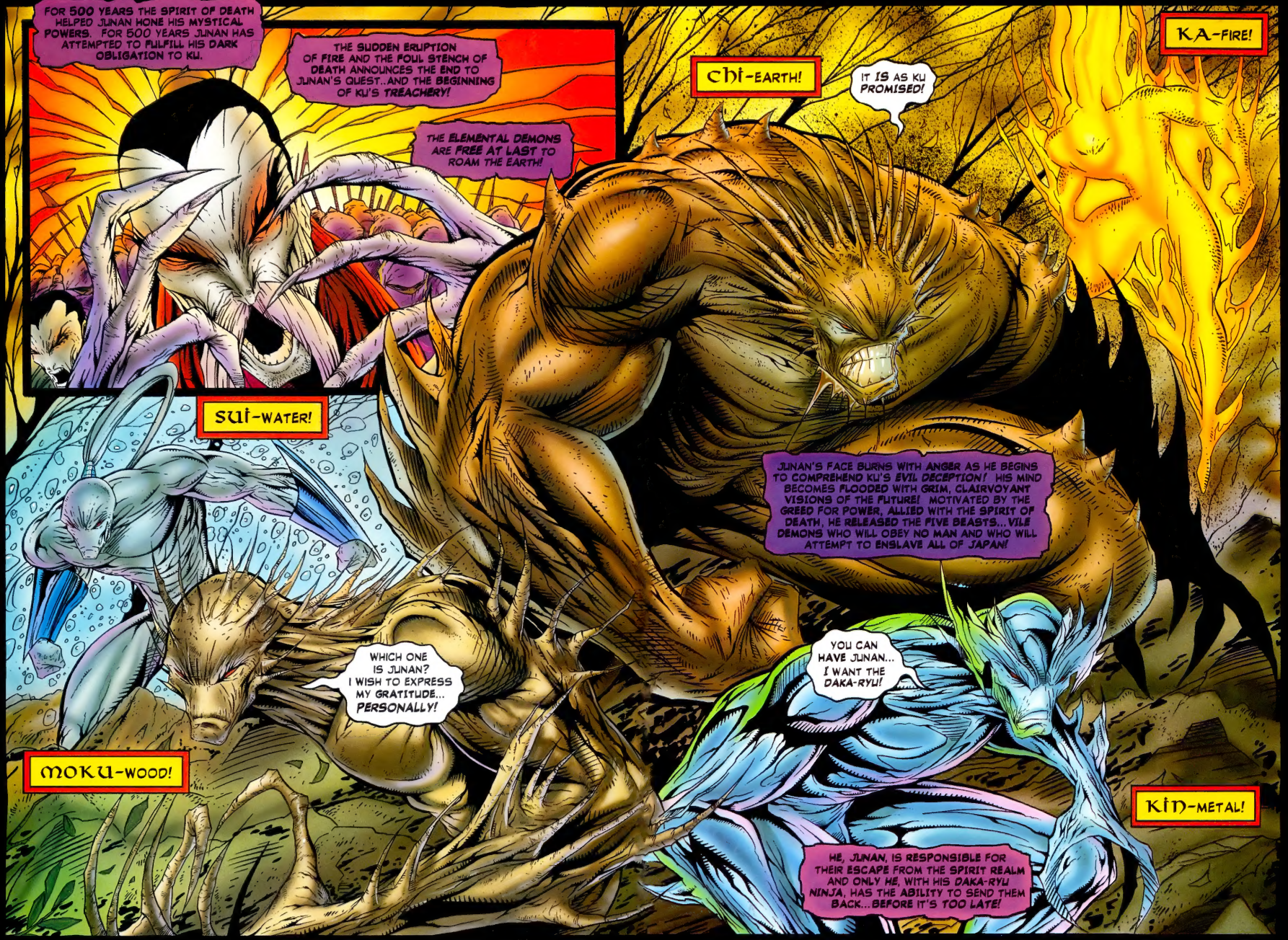
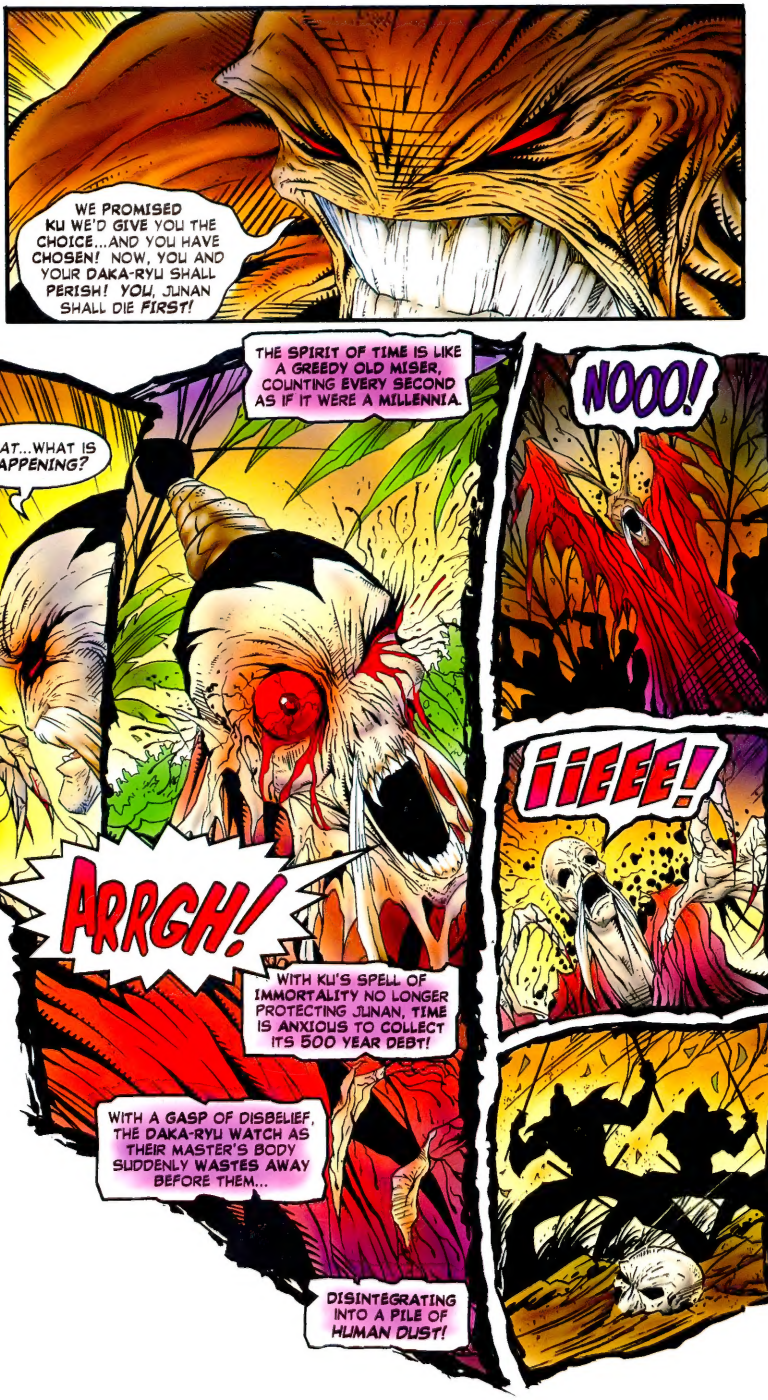
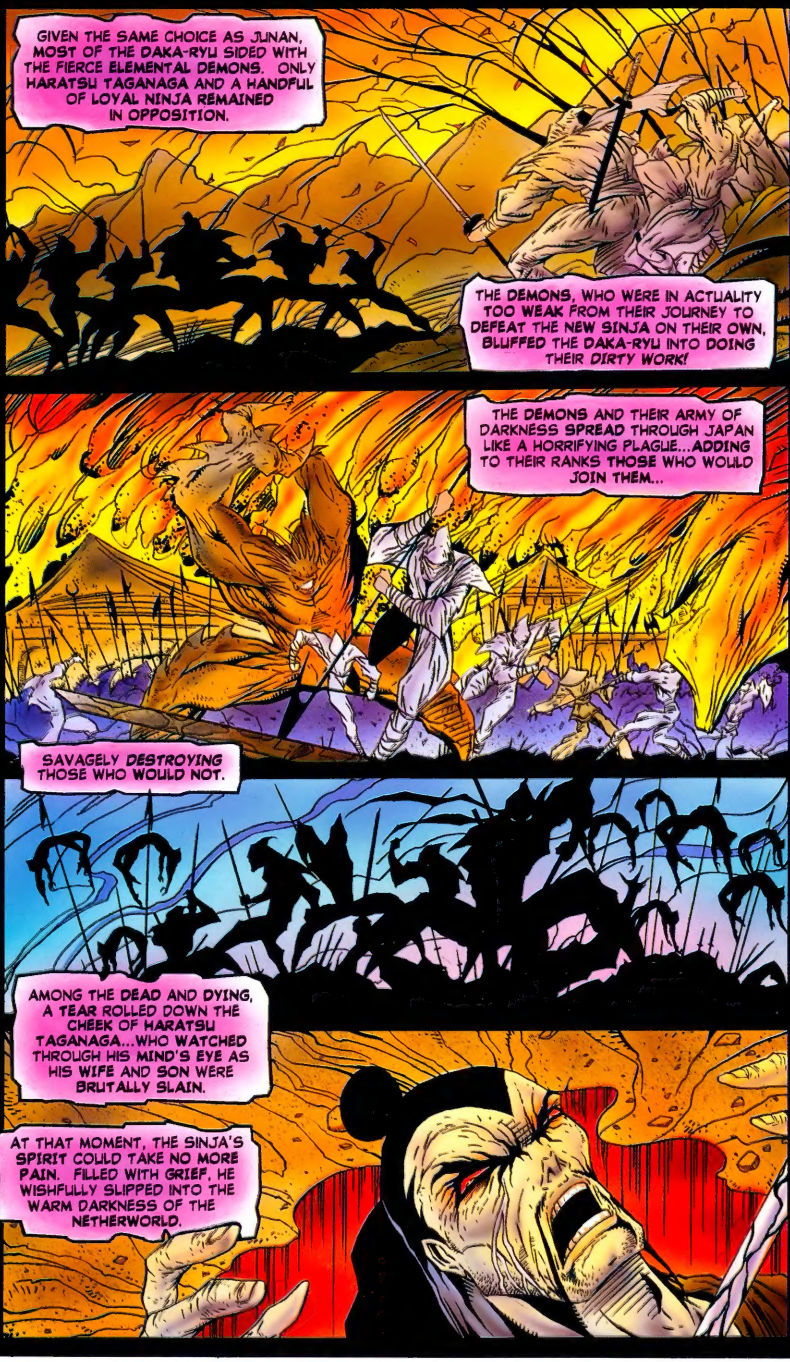

13TH CENTURY JAPAN...
HIDDEN WITHIN THE HILLS OF THE MYSTERIOUS IGA MOUNTAINS, JUNAN, SINJA MASTER OF THE MYSTICAL DAKA-RYU NINJA CLAN, PREPARES TO GIVE LIFE TO THE ELEMENTS!
FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, KU, THE SPIRIT OF DEATH, PROMISED JUNAN IMMORTALITY IN RETURN FOR RELEASING THE FIVE ELEMENTAL BEINGS...HE SIMPLY LEFT OUT ONE DETAIL... WHERE JUNAN'S ETERNITY WOULD BE SPENT!
KU HAS LONG BEEN AN ALLY OF THE DAKA-RYU, HOWEVER, WE MUST BE PREPARED FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF DECEPTION! SHOULD THIS BECOME AN ACT OF TRICKERY, WE MUST TEACH KU A LESSON ABOUT HONOR HE'LL NOT SOON FORGET! KU GAVE ME THE POWER TO BRING FORTH THE DEMONS OF THE ELEMENTS. SHOULD I BE STRUCK DOWN, HARATSU TAGANAGA WILL INHERIT MY MYSTICAL POWERS AND BECOME THE NEW SINJA OF THE DAKA-RYU!
HARATSU, YOU WILL HAVE THE POWER TO CAST THE DEMONS BACK FROM WHENCE THEY CAME!
I UNDERSTAND, MY MASTER.
THEN WE ARE READY! COME, DAKA-RYU, LET US BEGIN! THE SPIRIT OF DEATH HAS WAITED 500 YEARS FOR THIS MOMENT... HE SHOULD NOT BE KEPT WAITING ANY LONGER!
STORIES ABOUT JUNAN, THE 500 YEAR OLD SINJA, HAVE BEEN TOLD THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES. THE EMPEROR'S SAMURAI FEAR HIM SO MUCH, THEY KILL ANYONE WHO DARES SPEAK HIS NAME IN THEIR PRESENCE! MOST THINK OF JUNAN AS JUST A GHOST STORY, BUT THE DAKA-RYU KNOW BETTER. THEY HAVE WITNESSED THE SINJA'S SUPERNATURAL POWERS BEFORE AND OBEY HIM WITHOUT HESITATION! AS JUNAN UTTERS THE DARK WORDS OF RESURRECTION, HIS VOICE BECOMES SOMETHING INHUMAN!

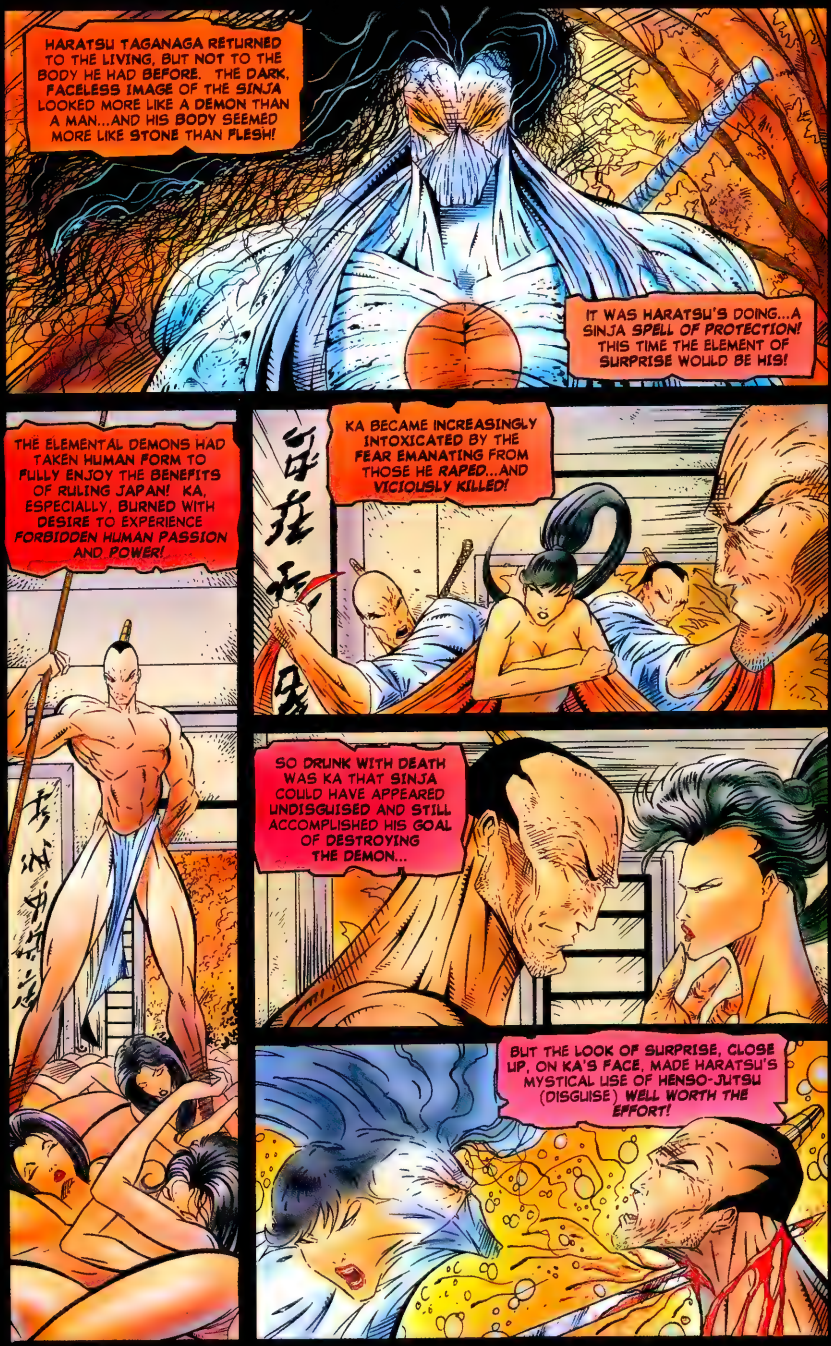

FOR 500 YEARS THE SPIRIT OF DEATH HELPED JUNAN HONE HIS MYSTICAL POWERS. FOR 500 YEARS JUNAN HAS ATTEMPTED TO FULFILL HIS DARK OBLIGATION TO KU.
THE SUDDEN ERUPTION OF FIRE AND THE FOUL STENCH OF DEATH ANNOUNCES THE END TO JUNAN'S QUEST...AND THE BEGINNING OF KU'S TREACHERY!
THE ELEMENTAL DEMONS ARE FREE AT LAST TO ROAM THE EARTH!
SUI-WATER!
MOKU-WOOD!
WHICH ONE IS JUNAN? I WISH TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE... PERSONALLY!
CHI-EARTH!
IT IS AS KU PROMISED!
KA-FIRE!
JUNAN'S FACE BURNS WITH ANGER AS HE BEGINS TO COMPREHEND KU'S EVIL DECEPTION! HIS MIND BECOMES FLOODED WITH GRIM, CLAIRVOYANT VISIONS OF THE FUTURE! MOTIVATED BY THE GREED FOR POWER, ALLIED WITH THE SPIRIT OF DEATH, HE RELEASED THE FIVE BEASTS...VILE DEMONS WHO WILL OBEY NO MAN AND WHO WILL ATTEMPT TO ENSLAVE ALL OF JAPAN!
YOU CAN HAVE JUNAN... I WANT THE DAKA-RYU!
KIN-METAL!
HE, JUNAN, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ESCAPE FROM THE SPIRIT REALM AND ONLY HE, WITH HIS DAKA-RYU NINJA, HAS THE ABILITY TO SEND THEM BACK...BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

JUNAN'S VOICE GROWLS IN THE MINDS OF HIS FOLLOWERS AS HE TELEPATHICALLY WARNS THE DAKA-RYU OF THE PERIL UNFOLDING BEFORE THEM.
HEAR ME, DAKA-RYU, WE HAVE BEEN DECEIVED! THE DEMONS ARE WEAK, HAVING TRAVELED FROM THE PIT OF DARKNESS TO OUR WORLD! WE MUST DESTROY THEM, NOW, BEFORE THEY REGAIN THEIR STRENGTH AND BECOME TOO POWERFUL FOR US TO DEFEAT!
WE HEARD THAT JUNAN!
REALLY, JUNAN, WE EXPECTED YOU'D BE MORE CUNNING THAN TO ANNOUNCE YOUR PLANS TO THE REST OF THE WORLD!
JOIN YOU?! I AM SINJA! I FOLLOW NO MAN AND CERTAINLY NO DEMONS! IF YOU CAN HEAR MY THOUGHTS, EVIL ONES...THEN HEAR THIS!
YOU HAVE SEVERELY UNDERESTIMATED US, JUNAN! WE MAY NOT HAVE ALL OUR STRENGTH, BUT WE CERTAINLY HAVE ENOUGH TO DO AWAY WITH THE LIKES OF YOU!
KU HAS GIVEN YOU THE GIFT OF IMMORTALITY BUT HE HAS GIVEN US THE RIGHT TO TAKE IT AWAY, ALLOWING THE SPIRIT OF TIME TO HAVE HIS WAY WITH YOU...UNLESS YOU DECIDE TO JOIN US!


WE PROMISED KU WE'D GIVE YOU THE CHOICE...AND YOU HAVE CHOSEN! NOW, YOU AND YOUR DAKA-RYU SHALL PERISH! YOU, JUNAN SHALL DIE FIRST!
THE SPIRIT OF TIME IS LIKE A GREEDY OLD MISER, COUNTING EVERY SECOND AS IF IT WERE A MILLENNIA.
WHAT...WHAT IS HAPPENING?
ARRGH!
WITH KU'S SPELL OF IMMORTALITY NO LONGER PROTECTING JUNAN, TIME IS ANXIOUS TO COLLECT ITS 500 YEAR DEBT!
WITH A GASP OF DISBELIEF, THE DAKA-RYU WATCH AS THEIR MASTER'S BODY SUDDENLY WASTES AWAY BEFORE THEM...
DISINTEGRATING INTO A PILE OF HUMAN DUST!
NOOO!
iiEEE!


GIVEN THE SAME CHOICE AS JUNAN, MOST OF THE DAKA-RYU SIDED WITH THE FIERCE ELEMENTAL DEMONS. ONLY HARATSU TAGANAGA AND A HANDFUL OF LOYAL NINJA REMAINED IN OPPOSITION.
THE DEMONS, WHO WERE IN ACTUALITY TOO WEAK FROM THEIR JOURNEY TO DEFEAT THE NEW SINJA ON THEIR OWN, BLUFFED THE DAKA-RYU INTO DOING THEIR DIRTY WORK!
THE DEMONS AND THEIR ARMY OF DARKNESS SPREAD THROUGH JAPAN LIKE A HORRIFYING PLAGUE...ADDING TO THEIR RANKS THOSE WHO WOULD JOIN THEM...
SAVAGELY DESTROYING THOSE WHO WOULD NOT.
AMONG THE DEAD AND DYING, A TEAR ROLLED DOWN THE CHEEK OF HARATSU TAGANAGA...WHO WATCHED THROUGH HIS MIND'S EYE AS HIS WIFE AND SON WERE BRUTALLY SLAIN.
AT THAT MOMENT, THE SINJA'S SPIRIT COULD TAKE NO MORE PAIN. FILLED WITH GRIEF, HE WISHFULLY SLIPPED INTO THE WARM DARKNESS OF THE NETHERWORLD.

SUDDENLY, HARATSU FOUND HIMSELF BATHED IN WHITE LIGHT AND THE WEIGHT OF HIS SORROW...LIFTED! STANDING BEFORE HIM, RADIATING GOODNESS, WAS THE BEAUTIFUL SEISHIN... THE SPIRIT OF LIFE!
HARATSU, YOU AND YOUR FAMILY HAVE BEEN THE VICTIM OF A MOST TREACHEROUS LIE. YOUR MASTER, JUNAN, SIDED WITH KU TO BRING FORTH THE ELEMENTAL DEMONS, BELIEVING HE WOULD BE REWARDED WITH IMMORTALITY AND UNTOLD POWER. INSTEAD HE WAS SLAIN...AND ALL HIS POWER, KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM TRANSFERRED TO YOU.
THE DEMONS TRICKED THE DAKA-RYU INTO BELIEVING THEY WERE ALL POWERFUL AT A TIME WHEN THEY WERE MOST VULNERABLE. YOU WERE SLAIN BY YOUR FRIENDS...AND YOUR FAMILY WAS SLAIN BY YOUR FRIENDS.
JAPAN NOW FACES IT'S FINAL HOUR OF DARKNESS! KU HAS UPSET THE NATURAL BALANCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH... BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL. I NEED A CHAMPION, HARATSU, AND LIKE JUNAN, I HAVE CHOSEN YOU!
I AM HONORED, SEISHAN...BUT I HAVE LITTLE LEFT TO FIGHT FOR.
IF YOU WILL BE MY WARRIOR, HARATSU, AND IF YOU SUCCEED IN DEFEATING THE ELEMENTAL DEMONS, I PROMISE I WILL RESTORE LIFE TO YOUR WIFE AND SON! UNLIKE KU, YOU WILL FIND ME TO BE AN HONORABLE SPIRIT.
THANK YOU SEISHAN. I PROMISE, I WILL NOT FAIL YOU!


HARATSU TAGANAGA RETURNED TO THE LIVING, BUT NOT TO THE BODY HE HAD BEFORE. THE DARK, FACELESS IMAGE OF THE SINJA LOOKED MORE LIKE A DEMON THAN A MAN...AND HIS BODY SEEMED MORE LIKE STONE THAN FLESH!
IT WAS HARATSU'S DOING...A SINJA SPELL OF PROTECTION! THIS TIME THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE WOULD BE HIS!
THE ELEMENTAL DEMONS HAD TAKEN HUMAN FORM TO FULLY ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF RULING JAPAN! KA, ESPECIALLY, BURNED WITH DESIRE TO EXPERIENCE FORBIDDEN HUMAN PASSION AND POWER!
KA BECAME INCREASINGLY INTOXICATED BY THE FEAR EMANATING FROM THOSE HE RAPED...AND VICIOUSLY KILLED!
SO DRUNK WITH DEATH WAS KA THAT SINJA COULD HAVE APPEARED UNDISGUISED AND STILL ACCOMPLISHED HIS GOAL OF DESTROYING THE DEMON...
BUT THE LOOK OF SURPRISE, CLOSE UP, ON KA'S FACE, MADE HARATSU'S MYSTICAL USE OF HENSO-JUTSU (DISGUISE) WELL WORTH THE EFFORT!

WITH VARYING STRATEGY AND UNSURPASSED SKILL, HARATSU SUCCEEDED IN DEFEATING FOUR OF THE FIVE ELEMENTALS.
THE LAST REMAINING DEMON, CHI (EARTH), WAS THE MOST POWERFUL AND RESOURCEFUL!
YOU HAVE FARED WELL AGAINST MY BROTHERS, SINJA, BUT THEY WERE UNPREPARED! YOU CAUGHT THEM IN HUMAN FORMS, HIGH ON THE DRUG OF DEATH! I'VE BEEN PREPARING FOR YOU, SINJA!
YOU ARE SURROUNDED! THERE IS NO ESCAPE! NOW IT IS YOUR TURN TO FEEL THE COLD EMBRACE OF DEATH!
I AM PREPARED TO DIE, DEMON! MY LIFE WOULD BE MEANINGLESS IF YOU REMAINED IN THIS WORLD!
MY DEATH, HOWEVER, WILL BE FULL OF PURPOSE... BECAUSE IT WILL DESTROY YOU! WHEN YOU SEE KU, TELL HIM SEISHAN SENDS HER REGRETS!
AS SINJA PLUNGES HIS SWORD DEEP INTO HIS BODY, A FINAL SPELL OF DESTRUCTION IS CAST! 500 YEARS OF ENERGY AND MAGIC FLOODS THE ROOM TO ELIMINATE HIS ENEMIES! THE SPELL WILL COST HARATSU HIS LIFE...BUT RETURN LIFE TO THE ONES HE LOVES.

IN THE SPIRIT REALM, HARATSU'S SOUL FINALLY KNOWS PEACE.
CONGRATULATIONS, MY CHAMPION! YOU DEFEATED THE DEMONS AND, AS PROMISED, I STAND READY TO RESURRECT YOUR WIFE AND SON.
THE POWER YOU INHERITED FROM JUNAN AND THE POWERS I BESTOWED UPON YOU WILL FOREVER BE PASSED DOWN TO THE FIRST BORN SON OF EACH NEW GENERATION OF TAGANAGA. ONE NEVER KNOWS WHEN THE NEED FOR SUCH AN HONORABLE CHAMPION MIGHT ARISE IN THE FUTURE!
THANK YOU, SEISHAN. MAY I SAY GOOD-BYE TO MY FAMILY BEFORE THEY ENTER THE LAND OF THE LIVING?
CERTAINLY.
KUMI, MY LOVE... USE YOUR GOODNESS TO BRING LIGHT INTO THE WORLD. RAISE OUR SON TO BE AN HONORABLE MAN.
TAKU, MY SON, YOU ARE BLESSED TO INHERIT INCREDIBLE POWERS! USE THEM WISELY TO REBUILD JAPAN AND FOREVER PROTECT THE WORLD FROM THE FORCES OF DARKNESS.
YES, FATHER.

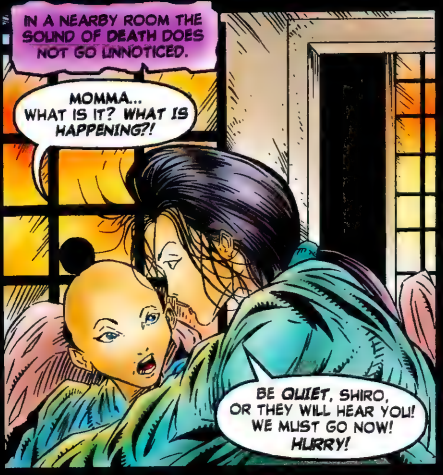
TAKU TAGANAGA EVENTUALLY BECAME RULER OF THE YAMATO PROVINCE, AFTER HELPING JAPAN HEAL FROM ITS ORDEAL WITH THE ELEMENTAL DEMONS.
WITH EACH NEW GENERATION OF DAIMYO, THE TAGANAGA NAME BECAME REVERED BOTH AS HONORABLE AND FAIR.
IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, 400 YEARS FOLLOWING HARATSU TAGANAGA'S DEMISE, LEGEND OF THE SINJA AND HIS BATTLE WITH THE ELEMENTAL DEMONS LIVED ON IN THE MINDS OF NINJA.
KOTARO, LEADER OF THE NAGA-RYU, STUDIED THE DARK ARTS IN HOPE OF RELEASING THE DEMONS...AND CLAIMING THEIR POWER AS HIS OWN.

KOTARO, WE HAVE BUSINESS TO DISCUSS!
DISCUSS IT WITH MY SHURIKEN!
THUK
I ADMIRE YOUR SKILL, KOTARO, BUT REALLY...IS THAT ANY WAY TO GREET A FRIEND?
THUK
THUK
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?
WHAT I WANT, KOTARO, IS TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR OBJECTIVE! THE POWERS OF THE ELEMENTS COULD BE YOURS!
AS FOR WHO I AM, IF YOU ARE TOO STUPID TO FIGURE THAT OUT ON YOUR OWN, I'M WASTING MY TIME!
KU?!?
MY, WE ARE BRIGHT, AREN'T WE?

THE ELEMENTAL DEMONS WERE IMPRISONED BY A SPELL CAST FROM HARATSU TAGANAGA. THEY CAN ONLY BE RELEASED AGAIN IF THE FIRST BORN OF HIS NEWEST GENERATION BREAKS HARATSU'S SPELL.
I AM PREPARED TO MAKE YOU JONIN OF ALL NINJA! I AM PREPARED TO MAKE YOU SINJA! BUT, IN RETURN, YOU MUST RELEASE THE ELEMENTALS! SHOULD YOU FAIL OR BETRAY ME, KOTARO, THE LEGEND OF JUNAN'S DEATH SHALL BE NOTHING COMPARED TO THE LEGEND OF YOUR HORRIFIC DEMISE!
THAT SHOULD BE EASY! WHO IS THIS FIRST BORN? WE SHALL FORCE HIM TO BREAK THE SPELL!
FOOL! IF IT WERE THAT EASY, DON'T YOU THINK IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DONE LONG AGO? SHINKURO TAGANAGA MUST BE KILLED SO THAT HIS POWER IS TRANSFERRED TO HIS SON, SHIRO.
KU, I PROMISE, I WILL NOT BETRAY YOU!
IN ORDER TO BREAK THE SPELL, SHIRO MUST FIRST BE TRAINED IN THE DARK ARTS OF SINJITSU...AN ART FORM YOU HAVE JUST BEGUN TO LEARN YOURSELF!
THEN I MAKE YOU...SINJA! NOW, YOU MUST TRAIN SHIRO TAGANAGA IN THE DARK ARTS!

LATER THAT NIGHT, KOTARO'S NINJA STORM THE TAGANAGA CASTLE...
NOBUNAGA SAID YOU COULDN'T BE TRUSTED, KOTARO. IF YOU KILL ME, YOU WILL BE SIGNING YOUR OWN DEATH WARRANT! -

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONCERN, "LORD" TAGANAGA, BUT I HAVE MORE PRESSING CONCERNS THAN THE WRATH OF YOUR FELLOW DAIMYO!
ARGG!


IN A NEARBY ROOM THE SOUND OF DEATH DOES NOT GO UNNOTICED.
MOMMA... WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS HAPPENING?!
BE QUIET, SHIRO, OR THEY WILL HEAR YOU! WE MUST GO NOW! HURRY!

OUTSIDE THE CASTLE, YOUNG SHIRO AND HIS MOTHER FLEE FOR THEIR LIVES...

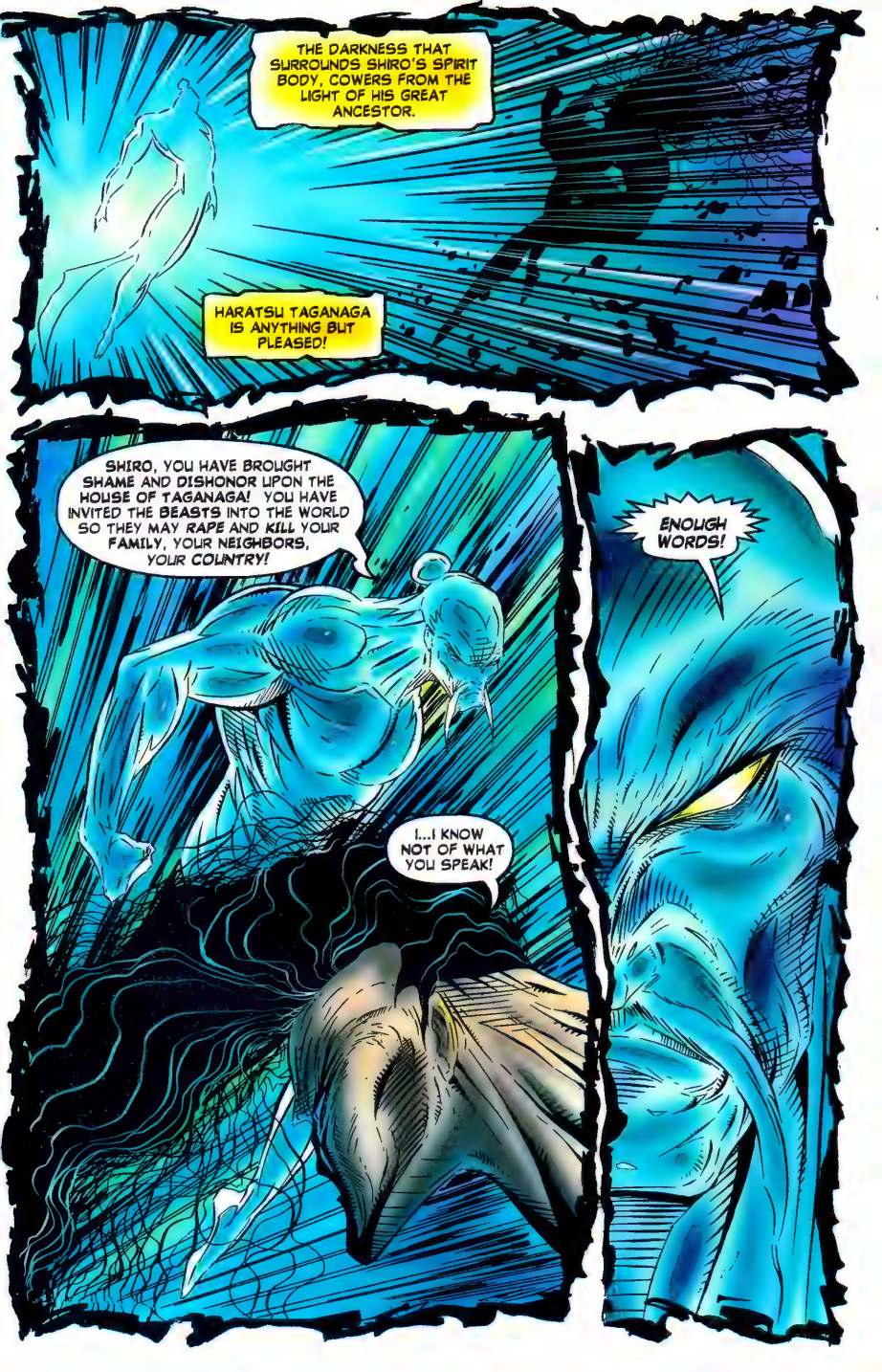
...BUT A NINJA ARROW FINDS IT'S MARK!
PHUMP!
OH!
MOMMA!!
MOMMA! MOMMA!
RUN, SHIRO, RUN! DON'T LET THEM CATCH YOU!
NO, MOMMA! I WON'T LEAVE YOU!
SHIRO, DO AS YOU'RE TOLD. NOW! RUN!
AH!
THUMP
NO!

YAAGH!
PREPARE TO DIE, RUNT!
AHH!
THUK
THUK
THUK
THUK
HUH!?
THIS WAY! FOLLOW ME!!

IN RETALIATION FOR SHINKURO TAGANAGA'S ASSASSINATION, NOBUNAGA ODA, DAIMYO OF THE KYOTO PROVINCE, LED A MASSIVE INVASION OF THE IGA MOUNTAINS IN 1581...CRUSHING THE POWER OF THE NINJA!
CLANS LIKE THE MOMOCHI, TOGAKURE, HATTORI AND NAGA-RYU SURVIVED BY TAKING THEIR MEMBERS INTO NEW RETREATS, DEEPER INTO THE IGA MOUNTAINS.
THERE, THE NINJA TRAINING BEGAN ANEW...
AND KOTARO BEGAN TEACHING SHIRO THE MYSTICAL ARTS OF SINJITSU!
IT WAS NOBUNAGA WHO KILLED YOUR PARENTS, SHIRO! HE MADE IT LOOK LIKE NINJA WERE RESPONSIBLE...SO HE COULD START A WAR AGAINST US!
PUSH YOURSELF, SHIRO! I WILL TEACH YOU OUR WAYS...SO ONE DAY YOU MAY HAVE YOUR REVENGE!

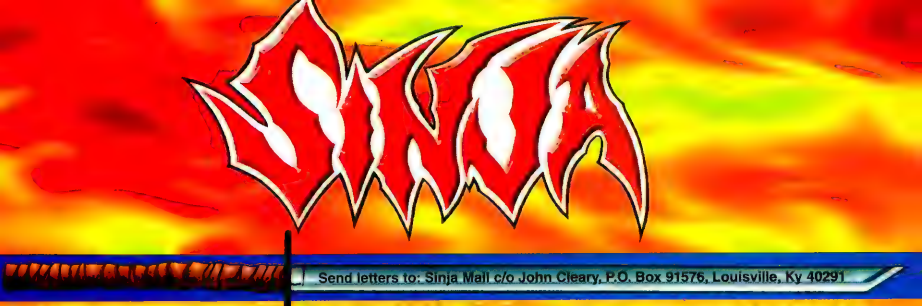
IT TOOK EIGHT LONG YEARS FOR SHIRO TO FINALLY REACH HIS FULL POTENTIAL AND HARNESS THE POWERS OF HIS GREAT ANCESTOR. ALL THE WHILE, KOTARO TEMPTED SHIRO WITH THE PROMISE OF REVENGE...KNOWING FULL WELL IT WAS HE WHO KILLED SHIRO'S PARENTS!
THE TIME HAD COME FOR KOTARO TO BRING HIS PLAN FULL CIRCLE.
SHIRO, I CAN TEACH YOU NO MORE. NOW YOU MUST LEARN FROM THE ELEMENTS THEMSELVES!
BY BRINGING FORTH THE FIVE BEINGS OF THE ELEMENTS, YOU WILL GAIN EACH OF THEIR POWERS, AND TRULY BECOME AN ARMY OF ONE!
AS SHIRO CHANTS THE DARK WORDS OF RESURRECTION..KOTARO PREPARES TO DELIVER HIS FINAL ACT OF BETRAYAL!
AND HOW AM I TO DO THIS, MY MASTER?
THAT IS SOMETHING YOU MUST DISCOVER WITHIN YOURSELF. THIS IS YOUR FINAL CHALLENGE, SHIRO...YOUR LAST TEST...AFTER WHICH YOUR ENEMIES WILL BE POWERLESS AGAINST YOU! BRING FORTH THE ELEMENTALS...AND YOU WILL HAVE YOUR REVENGE!

SRAAK!
WHO HAS RELEASED US FROM OUR SENTENCE OF ETERNAL BANISHMENT?
SLASH
IT IS I, SINJA MASTER, KOTARO, WHO HAS CALLED YOU FORTH! I AM NOW YOUR MASTER! AND I COMMAND YOU...BESTOW YOUR POWERS UPON ME! MAKE ME INVINCIBLE!
FOOL! WE SERVE NO MORTAL! MAKE YOU INVINCIBLE? HAH! WE SHALL MAKE YOU DEAD!


THE DARKNESS THAT SURROUNDS SHIRO'S SPIRIT BODY, COWERS FROM THE LIGHT OF HIS GREAT ANCESTOR.
HARATSU TAGANAGA IS ANYTHING BUT PLEASED!
SHIRO, YOU HAVE BROUGHT SHAME AND DISHONOR UPON THE HOUSE OF TAGANAGA! YOU HAVE INVITED THE BEASTS INTO THE WORLD SO THEY MAY RAPE AND KILL YOUR FAMILY, YOUR NEIGHBORS, YOUR COUNTRY!
I...I KNOW NOT OF WHAT YOU SPEAK!
ENOUGH WORDS!

IT IS TIME YOU LEARNED WHAT YOU'VE DONE!
ARGG!
IT WAS KOTARO WHO KILLED MY PARENTS, ALL ALONG! I WAS DECEIVED...USED BY KOTARO TO RELEASE THE DEMONS, BELIEVING THEY WOULD HELP WITH MY REVENGE!
I AM SUCH A FOOL!
YOU MUST RETURN THE DEMONS TO THEIR FIERY PRISON...OR SUFFER ETERNITY IN THEIR PLACE! YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED PEACE OR PLEASURE UNTIL YOU HAVE UNDONE YOUR TERRIBLE CRIME!
I PROMISE YOU, HARATSU, I WILL NOT FAIL YOU AGAIN!

JAPAN, 1996. IN WHAT SEEMED LIKE ONLY SECONDS, SEVERAL CENTURIES HAVE PASSED! SHIRO CANNOT BEGIN TO COMPREHEND THE SIGHT NOW BEFORE HIS RESURRECTED EYES.
IT IS AS MY GREAT ANCESTOR SAID IT WOULD BE! JAPAN HAS BEEN CORRUPTED, RAVAGED BY THE BEASTS THAT I UNLEASHED! IS IT TOO LATE?
I REFUSE TO GIVE INTO DESPAIR! I REFUSE TO FURTHER DISHONOR MY FAMILY'S NAME! SOMEWHERE, AMONG THESE TOWERS OF ROCK, STEEL AND LIGHT, THE FIVE ELEMENTAL DEMONS ARE LAUGHING AT ME! MOCKING ME!
I WILL FIND THEM... AND I WILL MAKE THEM BEG FOR MERCY BEFORE SENDING THEIR SCREAMING SOULS BACK TO HELL! I WILL BE VICTORIOUS! FOR I AM HEIR TO THE POWERS OF HARATSU TAGANAGA! I AM...
SINJA
THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES IN
SINJA: RESURRECTION!
A THREE PART MINI-SERIES
BEGINNING IN AUGUST!



Send letters to: Sinja Mail c/o John Cleary, P.O. Box 91576, Louisville, Ky 40291

Hello and welcome to SINJA #1: DEADLY SINS.

My name is John Cleary. Together with my brother, Tim, we are the creators of SINJA and hope you enjoyed this origin issue. It is our goal to make each and every future issue as awesome as humanly possible. I'd like to give a little background on how this all came to be.

About three years ago I sent samples of my work to Topps Comics in response to their ad in the CBG looking for artists. At the time, I just completed a two year stint in commercial art and was bound and determined to land a job drawing comics. My ultimate goal was to draw for Image. After a few months of going back and forth, sending samples and getting responses, Topps gave me a shot working on the SATAN'S SIX series. I am forever grateful to Dwight Jon Zimmerman and Jim Salicrup at TOPPS for believing in me and giving me my first big break.

Shortly thereafter, Jim Salicrup informed me that Todd McFarlane was looking for an artist for a new series entitled BOOF. At the time, Todd was my sole inspiration for wanting to draw comics. Each time I looked at his stuff I would freak. I basically taught myself to draw by studying his work. It had a huge impact on my style, which was still in its infancy in those early days. So I drew some BOOF samples and faxed them to Jim. I honestly never thought Todd McFarlane would give me a shot drawing his creation.

After a few weeks, it actually happened! I remember it clearly. I was sitting at my desk in my bedroom, thinking my comics career was short-lived. Then, all of a sudden, Todd McFarlane called me. It blew my freaking mind! I was talking with the master of comic books himself! Needless to say, he offered me the assignment and I accepted without hesitation. My second professional title was BOOF, an Image publication. I had made it!

Soon thereafter, Topps offered me a sequel to SATAN'S SIX called HELLSPAWN. Now I was doing two books at once! Upon completion of BOOF, Erik Larsen, my second favorite artist, called and offered me the four issue mini-series DEADLY DUO. Working for those two dudes couldn't have been any cooler. Thanks dudes! (Todd and Erik; how 'bout some more work?) During my run on DUO, I also did ROBIN #13 for DC, RUNE #6 for Malibu, a GEN13 #1 cover, SHADOWHAWK #17 (inks) and a bunch of other stuff; spogs, Spawn cards, covers, pinups, etc.

Well, soon after DUO, Tim and I were thinking of starting our own comic company and

self-publishing. That's when I met Steve Zyskowski, Lightning Comics Co-Publisher, on an on-line service. We got to talking about creator-owned projects and Steve offered to publish my own title. After thinking about it, Tim and I sat down, did a lot of brainstorming and came up with the idea for SINJA. After many months of preparation and a lot of hard work, this is the end result. We sincerely hope you enjoyed our origin story.

And now I'd like to thank many people who have been a great help and inspiration in my comics career. First and foremost, thank you God, for giving me the talent to pursue such a wonderful career; my family, for their encouragement and support; Steve Sikora, my art teacher, who inspired me to go after my goals; Dwight Jon Zimmerman - thanks for giving me the break; Jim Salicrup - thanks for letting me draw SATAN'SSIX; Jack Kirby - a true creator. I had the privilege of working on one of his creations. He never will be forgotten; Todd McFarlane - thanks for all the inspiration; Erik Larsen - it's been a pleasure. Thanks for the work and being a cool dude; Howard Shum - thanks for the help inking DEADLY DUO #4; Jim Valentino - for all the inking work; Steve and Joe Zyskowski for letting me bring my creation, SINJA, to life; Greg Weed for the slammin' custom colors; The rest of the crew at Lightning Comics; Jordan Gorfinkell - thanks for ROBIN; A big thanks to Beau Smith - a great guy who was a riot to work with; Tim Harkins - a cool dude I hope to work with again someday; My favorite band who is always playing while I sit at my desk . . . Metallica; and finally, my brother, Tim, who has been by my side always making sure I never lose sight of my goals. Thanks bro! Now if I left anyone out, sorry, but I think I covered just about everyone.

I'm anxious to hear from you SINJA readers, about what you think of SINJA. So drop me a line at the address below. I will read all my mail and try to answer every letter. Also, I'm in the habit of sending out artwork to random fans. Who knows, you could get a page of original artwork FREE! Now if that's not an incentive, I don't know what is!

And now, some news about upcoming projects you can expect from my studio. That's right, I'm forming my own studio! SINJA is not the only title up my sleeve. In August, I premiere the launch of a band of female warriors known as the KUNOICHI. This title is a little more light-humored than SINJA. It's gonna' ROCK so don't miss it. Also, look for a brand new three-part SINJA mini-series starting in AUGUST! While I'm at it, I might as well mention that if you want to check out my rendition of Lightning comics ultra hot title HELLINA and Entity Comics awesome babe NIRA-X, check out the HELLINA - NIRA X crossover shipping in July! I penciled and inked this title.

Well, that's about it for now, people. Again, thanks for giving SINJA a chance. Keep on the lookout for SINJA #1: RESURRECTION and KUNOICHI #1 coming in August!

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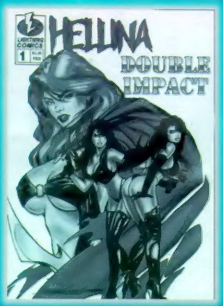

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